SIGN IN (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/user/login)

SUBSCRIBE (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/subscription/plans)

(https://www.downtoearth.org.in/) (https://www.facebook.com/down2earthindia) (https://twitter.com/@down2earthindia) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIB_MLJZL0T_s5OUuqhmbVA)

(https://www.downtoearth.org.in/)

Jatropha fever

Why is the Chhattisgarh government promoting a poisonous and invasive plant?

(https://api.whatsapp.com/send?text=Jatropha fever https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/jatropha-fever-12117)

(https://api.whatsapp.com/send?text=Jatropha fever https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/jatropha-fever-12117)

DTE
(https://www.downtoearth.org.in

NEXT COVERAGE ›

By PANKAJ OUDHIA (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/author/pankaj-oudhia-542)
Published: Tuesday 30 November 2004

Jatropha fever

The government of Chhattisgarh is on a mission to promote *jatropha*.

It has planted 6 lakh saplings in the last six months and has requested additional funds from the Union government to plant more *jatropha*s. On face of it, promoting the plant makes good sense: *jatropha* has medicinal uses and biodiesel can be

extracted from its seeds. But the Chhattisgarh government has forgotten that *jatropha* is also a very poisonous weed: many developed countries today spend huge sums of money to eliminate it.

The plant is actually native to tropical America and today occurs in most parts of India. In Chhattisgarh, people use its wild varieties for making fences to keep out animals. Traditional healers in the state also use parts of *jatropha* for making medicines, but they concede that this is a very recent usage. More importantly, these healers also admit that jatropha outcompetes other plants in its vicinity. One shudders to think what ecological mayhem might ensue once the government's large *jatropha* plantations come into their own. Introducing this plant without conducting proper feasibility studies has put Chhattisgarh's rich biodiversity in serious jeopardy. It's not even cheap Moreover, where is the potential market for *jatropha*-diesel? The government claims that its low cost will draw enough buyers. But is such biodiesel really cheap? No. In fact, at Rs 150 (or even more) per litre, it is nearly five times the cost of conventional diesel. The Chhattisgarh government is perhaps oblivious of the experiments of some African countries with *jatropha*. A few decades back, governments of these countries had promoted *jatropha* as a biofuel yielding plant. Did these projects have any success? No. These countries continue to rely on coventional diesel.

But the Chhattisgarh government has little time for such arguments. Every department is under the *jatropha* fever. *Panchayat* members have been roped in to plant saplings around village ponds and even the railways have taken to cultivating

the plant in its wasteland. This is not all: schools have also been targeted for plantation -- this, when local people live in perpetual scare of their children falling sick (even dying) after consuming the sweet but poisonous *jatropha* seeds.

And who exactly has prospered from the government's frenetic zeal to promote jatropha? The biggest beneficiaries have been the few suppliers who deal in the plant. These suppliers sell a jatropha sapling for Rs 6, sometimes, even Rs 10 although ideally one sapling should cost only Rs 0.50-Rs 0.90.

This is not to say that Chhattisgarh's farmers have shown no enthusiasm for the 'wonder plant'. In fact in Tilda district, there are *jatropha* plantations over 40 hectares of land. Many in the state have prospered and are now supplying the herb to different parts of India. But the question remains: is the venture sustainable?
All is not lost If the Chhattisgarh government is really serious in promoting *jatropha* over the long term, it should conduct feasibility studies. A pilot project should be undertaken in areas that have natural *jatropha* population; at the same time, the exotic varieties should be weeded out. The use of endemic plants will provide employment opportunities to local people; rooting out the exotic species would give much needed relief to the native flora. Moreover, if the Chhattisgarh government is so confident about using *jatropha* as a biodiesel, it should start a scheme to buy back the plants from the farmers. Only unscrupulous suppliers stand to lose from these moves.

Already, many exotic plants such as *eupatorium*, *eucalyptus*, *lantana* and water

hyacinths have caused enough damage to Chhattisgarh's biodiversity. The government should not compound matters any further. If the government is really keen on promoting biodiesel it should consider locally available plants such as the *karanj* (*Pongamia*).

Pankaj Oudhia is covenor, International Parthenium Research News Group and a member of Global Invasive Species Information Network

Chhattisgarh (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/chhattisgarh)

Agriculture (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/agriculture)

Governance (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/governance)

Governance (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/governance)

Medicinal P (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/medicinal-p)

Biodiesel (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/biodiesel)

Biodiesel (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/biodiesel)

Biodiesel (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/biodiesel)

POISONOUS PLANTS (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/poisonous-plants)

Weeds (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/weeds)

Weeds (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/weeds)

Debate (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/debate)

Debate (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/debate)

Web edition (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/web-edition)

Web edition (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/web-edition)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

World Health Organization (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/world-health-organization)

WHO (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/who)

UNSC (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/unsc)

treatment (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/treatment)

Obama (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/obama)

mononegavirus (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/mononegavirus)

Ebola vaccine (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/ebola-vaccine)

Ebola outbreak (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/ebola-outbreak)

ebola (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/ebola)

Subscribe to Weekly Newsletter : Email Subscribe

Donate Now (https://www.instamojo.com/downtoearth/donation-for-cse-fa166/)

POST A COMMENT

(https://www.downtoearth.org.in/)

Ivan Illich (1926-2002)

"His thought leads out of the prison of routinized, sterile, preconceived notions"

(https://api.whatsapp.com/send?text=Ivan Illich
 (1926-2002) https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/ivan-illich-br--19262002-12373)

in

(https://api.whatsapp.com/send?text=Ivan Illich
 (1926-2002) https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/ivan-illich-br--19262002-12373)

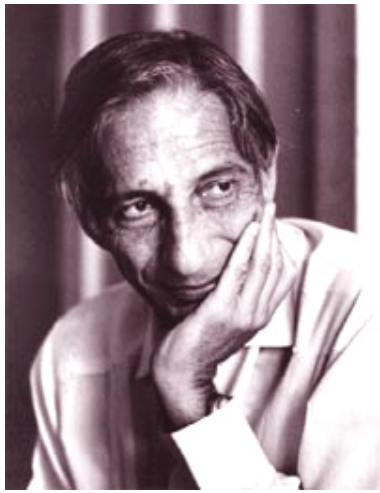
DTE
(https://www.downtoearth.org.in

NEXT COVERAGE ›

Published: Wednesday 15 January 2003

Ivan Illich

(1926-2002)



Ivan Illich, defrocked Catholic itinerant priest who spent a lifetime unmasking the pernicious hold of institutions and professionals on our lives, passed away in Bremen, Germany, on December 2, 2002. He was 76.

Perhaps the last of the great iconoclasts (Foucault, Bourdieu, Paul Goodman, Schumacher, among others) of his generation, Illich's controversial views on education, medicine, justice, work and development found manya sympathiser. However, they also brought him in head-on confrontation with the many "experts" he had chosen to denigrate.

In a perverse irony, he died to a deafening silence of the world -- the media, which he resolutely shunned and often chastised for its obeisance toso-called professionals, noticed his absence only belatedly, and that too rather perfunctorily. Indeed, most journals chose, wittingly or otherwise, to ignore him, as he did them. Needless to say, the Indian media radar didn't even register a blip.

Illich shot to fame in the 1970s with a series of intellectual molotov cocktails that brilliantly exposed the inherent failings of modern institutions such as schools and hospitals. In *Deschooling Society*, his most well-known work, he argued that "schooling...draws society into the trap of thinking that knowledge is hygienic, pure, respectable, deodorized, produced by human heads and amassed in stock..... [B]y making school compulsory, [people] are schooled to believe that the self-taught individual is to be discriminated against."

And in *Medical Nemesis,* he famously declared that "the medical establishment has become a major threat to health." He argued that expert systems like modern health obscure the political conditions that render society unhealthy; and that they tend to expropriate the power of individuals to heal themselves and to shape their environment. He coined the word "iatrogenesis" to describe the condition wherethe cure and the healer (read medicine and hospitals) themselves become sources of sickness.

With the same gusto and incisiveness, he went on to dissect other important preoccupations of modern life such as technological development (*Tools for Conviviality*), energy, transport and economic development (*Energy and Equity*), and work (*The Right to Useful Employment and its Professional Enemies* and *Shadow Work*). In 1971, he wrote his widely popular *Celebration of Awareness*, a grim elegy on progress and its follies. In an essay titled *A Constitution for Cultural Revolution,* he exhorted humanity to "learn a new language, a language that speaks not of development and underdevelopment but of true and false ideas about man, his

needs, and his potential." To quote the concluding lines:

"Only a cultural and institutional revolution which reestablishes man's control over his environment can arrest the violence by which developmentof institutions is now imposed bya few for their own interest. Maybe Marx has said it better, criticizing Ricardo and his school: 'They want production to be limited to 'useful things,' but they forget that the production of too many *useful* things results in too many *useless* people.'"

But Illich's archaeology of modern institutions also attracted much criticism. For instance, Ian Lister described Illich as "an intellectual maverick who deals in metaphors and allegories." M Gajardo, who edited the *Key Thinkers in Education* published by unesco, criticised Illich's ideas as "founded essentially on intuition, without any appreciable reference to the results of socio-educational or learning research. His criticism evolves in a theoretical vacuum." Others have criticised Illich for overrating the importance of schools to the exclusion of perhaps more immediate influence of families, television and advertising, jobs and housing structures.

However, Mathias Finger and J M Asn, in their *Adult Education at the Crossroads: Learning our way out*, point out that "Illich is not against schools or hospitals as such, but once a certain threshold of institutionalization is reached, schools make people more stupid, while hospitals make them sick. And more generally, beyond a certain threshold of institutionalized expertise, more experts are counterproductive

-- they produce the counter effect of what they set out to achieve."

Indeed, at a time when the leash of institutions and professionals on human lives has further tightened, Ivan Illich's call to deschool society couldn't be more relevant. Erich Fromm, the well-known author of *To have or To be,* underscored most eloquently theeternal value of Illich's ideas in his introduction to the latter's *Celebration of Awareness*. He writes: "The importance of his thoughts... lies in the fact that they have a liberating effect on the mind by showing new possibilities; they make the reader more alive because they open the door that leads out of the prison of routinized, sterile, preconceived notions."

Illich's detractors also often accused him of pedantic carping about progress without offering any alternatives. He had always ducked the question by retorting "I am not concerned withprescriptions."

Health Care (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/health-care)

Medical Research (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/medical-research)

Energy (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/energy)

Transport (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/transport)

Transport (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/transport)

Economic Development (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/economic-development)

Obituary (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/obituary)

Obituary (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/obituary)

Web edition (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/web-edition)

Web edition (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/web-edition)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/news)

Supreme Court (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/supreme-court)

SC (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/sc)

polluting industries (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/polluting-industries)

NGT (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/ngt)

National Green Tribunal (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/national-green-tribunal)

Ganga pollution (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/ganga-pollution)

Down to earth (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/down-to-earth)

Centre (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/tag/centre)

Subscribe to Weekly Newsletter : Email Subscribe

Donate Now (https://www.instamojo.com/downtoearth/donation-for-cse-fa166/)

POST A COMMENT

DownToEarth

Down To Earth is a product of our commitment to make changes in the way we manage our environment, protect health and secure livelihoods and economic security for all. We believe strongly that we can and must do things differently. Our aim is to bring you news, perspectives and knowledge to prepare you to change the world. We believe information is a powerful driver for the new tomorrow.

Quick Links

- India (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/india)
- World (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/world)
- Climate Change (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-
- News (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news)
- In - Depth (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage)
- DTE Blogs (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blogs)
- About Us (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/page/about-us-50353)
- Author Directory (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/author)
- Blogger Directory (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blogger)
- प्रदूषण (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/pollution)
- ऊर्जा (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/energy)
- जल (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/water)
- जलवायु परिवर्तन (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/climate-change)
- प्राकृतिक आपदा (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/natural-disasters)

change)
- Food (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/food)
- Health (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health)
- Water (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/water)
- Agriculture (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/agriculture)
- Videos (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/video)
- Photo Gallery (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/gallery)
- Focus Tag (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/focus)
- DTE Photo Library (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/gallery/photo-library)
- Publications (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/books)
- Contact Us (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/page/contact-us-50474)
- Privacy Policy (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/page/privacy-policy-58272)
- Terms and Conditions (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/page/terms-and-conditions-58271)
- Refunds & cancellations policy (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/page/refunds-and-cancellations-policy-58534)
- कृषि (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/agriculture)
- नदी (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/river)
- फूड (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/food)
- अर्थव्यवस्था (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/economy)
- वन्य जीव एवं जैव विविधता (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/wildlife-biodiversity)
- विकास (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/development)
- स्वच्छता (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/sanitation)
- स्वास्थ्य (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/health)
- विज्ञान (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/science)
- मौसम (https://www.downtoearth.org.in/hindistory/weather)

© Copyright Down To Earth 2021. All rights reserved.

(https://www.evalvenow.com)